

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSC-07 PA-04

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PER-05 AID-20 OMB-01 DRC-01 /115 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1648

INFO USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 0299

AMEMBASSY MEXICO CITY IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 4065

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS

SUBJECT: HUTCHISON CASE: MEETING WITH PRESIDENTIAL AIDE QUEZADA

1. FOLLOWING IS REPORT OF HOUR-LONG MEETING MY SPANISH AND VENEZUELAN

COLLEAGUES AND I HAD WITH QUEZADA AT 11 A.M. TODAY.

2. I GAVE HIM LETTER CITED S.D. 4045 AS REVISED PER STATE 216766 AND LEFT WITH HIM MEMORANDUM SUMMARIZING POINTS WHICH I DISCUSSED ORALLY AS FOLLOWS.

3. I BEGAN BY NOTING THAT THE DOMINICAN GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH OF NOT TAKING FORCEFUL ACTION AGAINST THE CONSULATE WHILE NOT YIELDING TO THE

KIDNAPPERS' OUTRAGEOUS DEMANDS WAS WIDELY UNDERSTOOD AND APPLAUDED.

HOWEVER, THE NEW DEVELOPMENT OF PROHIBITING MSGR. POLANCO FROM CONTINUING HIS DELIVERY OF PROVISIONS TO THE CONSULATE WAS GENERATING HIGHLY ADVERSE REACTION AND HARMING THE IMAGE OF THE DOMINICAN GOVERNMENT. IT WOULD BE PROTRAYED AS AN ACTION AGAINST A MAN OF THE CLOTH SEEKING TO PERFORM A NON-POLITICAL HUMANITARIAN

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MISSION AND AS AN INDICATION THAT THE DOMINICAN GOVERNMENT NOW

HAD LESS CONCERN FOR HUMANITARIAN CONSIDERATIONS.

4. I THEN REVIEWED THE ADVANTAGES OF A LONG HAUL STRATEGY ALONG THE LINES OF MY APPROACH TO POLICE CHIEF GUZMAN ON THIS ASPECT (SD-4062), EMPHASIZING THE FOLLOWING POINTS: THE MATTRESS INCIDENT REVEALED A SERIOUS PSYCHOLOGICAL WEAKNESS IN THE KIDNAPPERS' SITUATION, WHICH SHOULD BE EXPLOITED. CUTTING DOWN RATIONS TO THE CONSULATE WOULD BE TAKEN BY THE CAPTORS TO MEAN THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS ANXIOUS FOR A QUICK SOLUTION. JUST AS THE DOMINICAN GOVERNMENT WAS CONVINCED THE CAPTORS WOULD NOT HARM THE HOSTAGES FOR FEAR OF THEIR OWN LIVES, SO THE CAPTORS UNDERSTOOD THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT GO SO FAR AS TO MAKE THE PEOPLE INSIDE DIE OF STARVATION OR THIRST. THEREFORE, THE CAPTORS WOULD DISCIPLINE THEMSELVES TO THE REDUCED RATIONS AND SWEAT IT OUT. SINCE THE GOVERNMENT APPEARED TO BE ANXIOUS TO GET A QUICK SOLUTION, THE CAPTORS WOULD ACT IN A CONTRARY WAY. THUS, THE TACTIC OF REDUCING RATIONS WOULD HAVE A COUNTERPRODUCTIVE EFFECT ON THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE KIDNAPPERS. IT WOULD FIT IN WITH WHAT MENDEZ VARGAS WAS PROBABLY TELLING HIS NERVOUS YOUNG ASSOCIATES; THAT THE SITUATION WOULD BE SOON RESOLVED. IF THE CAPTORS' DESIRE FOR A QUICK RESOLUTION OF THE SITUATION WAS A WEAKNESS ON THEIR PART, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD GIVE THE IMPRESSION OF BEING PREPARED FOR A LONG HAUL, SENDING IN BOOKS, CLOTHING, AND OTHER SUCH SUPPLIES WHICH WOULD REFLECT SUCH INTENTION. THIS APPROACH WOULD HAVE AN EROSION EFFECT ON THE PSYCHOLOGY AND LEADERSHIP OF MENDEZ VARGAS.

5. THE TACTIC OF CUTTING SUPPLIES TO THE CONSULATE, I NOTED, WOULD ALSO INCREASE THE RISK TO THE HEALTH OF THE HOSTAGES BY LOWERING THEIR PHYSICAL RESISTANCE. A LONGER TERM TACTIC ON THE OTHER HAND WOULD SERVE AS PREVENTIVE MEDICINE, DECREASING THE POSSIBILITIES OF A DETERIORATION OF THE HEALTH OF THE HOSTAGES WHICH WOULD SERIOUSLY COMPLICATE THE SITUATION. IN ANY CASE, IF THE TACTIC WAS ADOPTED OF PRESSURING THE CAPTORS BY LIMITING AMOUNTS OF FOOD AND WATER, IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO AGREE ON THE MINIMUM QUANTITIES NECESSARY TO PROTECT THE HOSTAGES AGAINST POSSIBLE ILLNESS.

6. FINALLY, I MENTIONED THE DESIRABILITY OF ALLOWING RADIO BATTERIES TO GET INTO THE CONSULATE WITH THE PROVISIONS SINCE

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THE BATTERIES IN THE RADIOS THE CAPTORS HAD WERE PROBABLY WEAKENED BY NOW AND IT WOULD BE WELL FOR THE CAPTORS TO HEAR THE UNFAVORABLE REACTIONS TO THEIR HORRIBLE DEED.

7. FROM TIME TO TIME, MY COLLEAGUES (WITH WHOM I HAD DISCUSSED MY PRESENTATION BEFOREHAND) INTERJECTED TO INDICATE THEIR CONCURRENCE.

8. QUEZADA LISTENED CAREFULLY TO THE FOREGOING AND READ THE

MEMORANDUM, AFTER WHICH HE STATED THAT THE ANALYSIS WAS "BRILLIANT" AND "SENSIBLE" (PLEASE EXCUSE THE IMMODESTY) AND HE WOULD GET IT TO THE COMMITTEE NOW DEALING WITH THE SITUATION.

9. SUBSEQUENTLY QUEZADA CALLED ME TO SAY THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD READ MY LETTER TO QUEZADA AND HAD REAFFIRMED HIS ASSURANCE THAT THE DOMINICAN GOVERNMENT WAS NOT CONTEMPLATING ANY FORCEFUL ACTION AGAINST THE CONSULATE. THE PRESIDENT ALSO AGREED TO THE REQUESTS FOR ADEQUATE FOOD, WATER, MEDICINE AND CLOTHING CONTAINED IN THE LETTER. QUEZADA TOLD ME ALSO THAT HE HAD CALLED GUZMAN CONCERNING THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR DELIVERY OF PROVISIONS, WITH POLANCO OUT OF THE PICTURE. IF THE DIPLOMATS WOULD BRING THE SANDWICHES AND SOFT DRINKS TO THE AREA OF THE CONSULATE, GUZMAN TOLD QUEZADA, THE POLICE WOULD PLACE THESE PROVISIONS AT A POINT OPPOSITE THE ENTRANCE OF THE BUILDING AND WOULD TELL THE CAPTORS THAT THEY COULD PICK UP THE SUPPLIES, WHILE ASSURING THEM THAT THEY COULD DO SO WITHOUT ANY DANGER OF HARM. I REMONSTRATED WITH QUEZADA THAT WATER WAS MORE IMPORTANT TO THE HOSTAGES THAN COKES BUT HE SAID THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR THIS DELIVERY WERE TO ALLOW ONLY FOOD AND SOFT DRINKS, NO WATER.

10. I IMMEDIATELY HAD MY COOK PREPARE 13 VERY THICK MEAT, LETTUCE AND TOMATO SANDWICHES (ARA/EX PLEASE NOTE) WHICH MY SPANISH AND VENEZUELAN COLLEAGUES AND I DELIVERED TO THE POLICE COMMANDER IN THE AREA TOGETHER WITH 13 COKES AROUND 1:00 P.MBV WE WERE ABLE TO VERIFY THAT THE POLICE HAD INSTRUCTIONS TO PERMIT PASSAGE OF THE SUPPLIES AS GUZMAN HAD INDICATED. LATER, OUR LOOKOUTS WERE ABLE TO OBSERVE THAT THE SUPPLIES HAD BEEN PLACED ON A GATE POST NEXT TO THE SIDEWALK BUT HAD NOT BEEN PICKED UP. IN RESPONSE TO OUR INQUIRIES TO THE POLICE, WE WERE TOLD THAT THE POLICE HAD SHOUTED TO THE CAPTORS THAT THE FOOD AND COKES WERE THERE AND THAT A MEMBER OF THE CAPTORS' GROUP

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COULD PICK THEM UP UNDER GUARANTEE THAT HE WOULD NOT BE HARMED. HOWEVER, MENDEZ VARGAS SHOUTED BACK FROM A FRONT WINDOW EVINCING SUSPICION THAT FOOD WAS DOCTORED. AS OF EARLY THIS EVENING, THE PROVISIONS REMAINED ON THE GATE POST. WE HAVE THUS FAR MADE NO HEADWAY IN URGING POLICE OFFICIALS TO GET THE PROVISIONS CLOSER TO THE ENTRANCE TO THE BUILDING. HOWEVER, I AM PURSUING THE MATTER OF THIS DELIVERY WITH GUZMAN AND OTHER OFFICIALS. (NEXT INSTALLMENT OF THIS CLIFF-HANGER FOLLOWS.)

HURWITCH

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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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